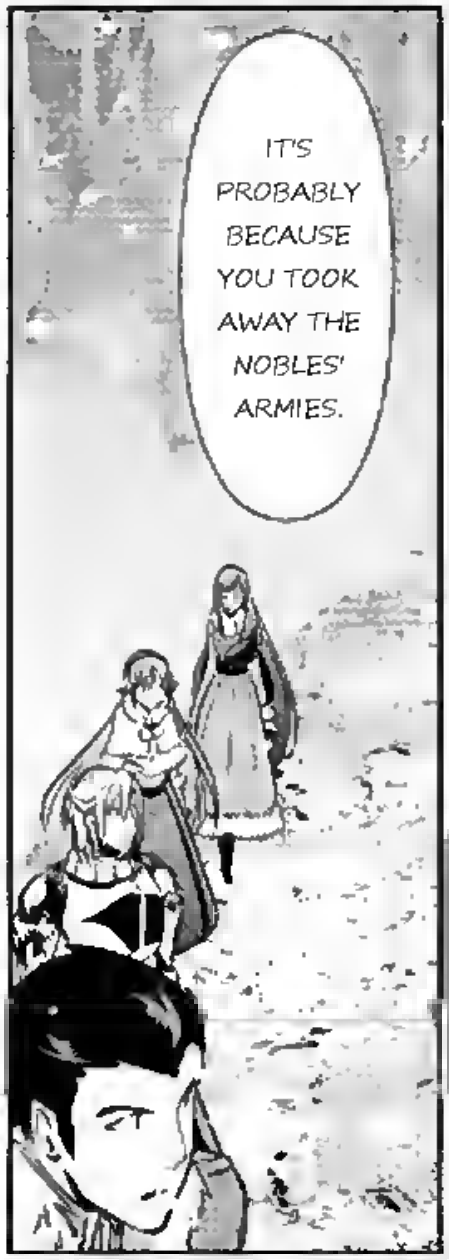
白の皇国物語 第四十六回
原作：白沢戌亥　漫画：不二まーゆ



I'VE CERTAINLY HEARD REPORTS OF MAGICIANS WITH TROUBLESOME PERSONALITIES JOINING BANDITS.
... TRUE.
THE MAGICIANS WHO COULDN'T TRANSFER INTO THE REGULAR ARMY OR FIND A PROPER JOB PROBABLY WENT ON TO BECOME BANDITS.
THE REGULAR ARMY'S STANDARDS ARE RATHER HIGH AFTER ALL.
YES, SIR!
DELIVER THE MESSAGE TO THE CAPITAL URGENTLY.
WE SHOULD DISPATCH THE ARMY TO DEAL WITH THEM.
AH... YOU HEARD THAT?
IF IT'S THAT BAD, I'LL CARRY YOU.
I'M USED TO CLIMBING MOUNTAINS BECAUSE I USED TO CLIMB THE SACRED MOUNTAIN, BUT ARE YOU FINE?
I'LL DO MY BEST! EVEN IF I HAVE TO CLING TO MASTER LECTIVAL!

BOTH HIS HIGHNESS AND HER GRACE ARE HEADED HERE.
THEY ARE LIKELY AWARE OF OUR PLAN.
CALLIAS DIDN'T RETURN.
WHILE HE WAS IMPATIENT, HIS METHOD WAS CERTAINLY AN OPTION.
OUR RURAL TEMPLE

THAT'S TRUE...
IF THIS DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE CENTRAL TEMPLE AND THE REGIONAL TEMPLES IS INTENTIONAL, IT SHOULD BE CORRECTED.
HOWEVER, THE TEMPLE IS CURRENTLY JUST GROWING FAT IN CENTRAL FOR THE SAKE OF POWER.
WE NEED TO WEAKEN THEM!
IS PROBABLY NO LONGER CAPABLE OF CHANGING ANYTHING.
HIS HIGHNESS IS NO DOUBT COMING HERE HIMSELF BECAUSE HE KNOWS OF OUR PLANS.

LUTZ, I UNDERSTAND HOW YOU WISH TO TAKE AWAY SOME OF CENTRAL'S POWER,
BUT IT'S NOT LIKE HIS HIGHNESS ISN'T CAPABLE OF COMMUNI-CATING.
WHAT USE IS THERE TO ANOTHER FIGHT NOW THAT CALLIAS IS GONE?
YOU'D RATHER WE CONTINUE AS WE HAVE?!
REGIONAL TEMPLES HAVE MANY ROLES,
THEY FUNCTION AS SCHOOLS OR CLINICS, BUT THEY'VE GROWN TO BE GREAT BURDENS FAR TOO HEAVY FOR US.
I'VE ALSO HEARD THAT THE REGENT HAS BEEN REFORMING THE TEMPLE...
.....
SO?
WHAT ARE WE GOING TA DO?

YOU THINK NOW THAT HIS HIGHNESS' TURNED UP HERE,
HE'LL UNDERSTAND SOON AS WE SHOW 'IM AROUND?
LEEFA...
BESIDES...

ARCHBISHOP MILEIDIA'S SHOWED HERSELF HERE AND WHAT SHE WANTS TA DO WITH US.
WE DON'T KNOW WHY
I NEVER LIKED HER BACK IN SCHOOL... I WANTED TA BECOME SOMEONE BIG IN CENTRAL TOO... WAIT... IF THIS GOES WELL...
IF WE SCREW THIS UP, IT'LL BE OFF WITH OUR HEADS,
REGARDLESS OF WHAT YOU WISHED TO DO.
BUT WE DON'T KNOW WHY HIS HIGHNESS' HERE, WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

MM... DISAPPEARED FROM THE VILLAGE.
HOW'S OUR CONTACT?
YOU SAY THAT, BUT IT'S NOT LIKE THE PEOPLE WHO EXPECTED OUR MOVE WILL JUST KEEP QUIET.
THERE WERE PLENTY OF LIAISONS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES LOITERING BY THE VILLAGES HERE BEFORE... THE TURMOIL HERE GAVE THEM PLENTY OF OPPORTUNITIES TO SNEAK IN...
THINK IT'S CAUSE OF HIS HIGHNESS COMIN' HERE?
IT PROBABLY DOESN'T MATTER WHETHER WE ACT OR NOT ANYMORE...

IT SEEMS THAT HIGH HIGHNESS DECIDED ON THE BUDGET FOR THIS REGION AND SOME CLERKS WERE HERE TO SEE THE SITUATION.
IN THAT CASE,
ARE WE IN AGREEMENT ON SIMPLY OBSERVING HIS HIGHNESS?
PRIEST!

PARTEAR VILLAGE
WAS ATTACKED BY BANDITS AND BEASTS!
PARTEAR?!
THAT'S THE VILLAGE I'M IN CHARGE OF!

WE DON'T HAVE ANY DETAILS, THE INFORMATION JUST CAME IN FROM A NEIGHBORING VILLAGE.
DON'T TELL ME THAT CONTACT...
WHAT'S GOING ON?!
LUTZ, LEND ME SOME KNIGHTS!
THERE'S NOT A MOMENT TO WASTE THEN!
SEND A MESSAGE TO HIS HIGH-NESS!
... I AGREE.
RATHER THAN RISKING IT, WE SHOULD ASK HIS HIGHNESS FOR ASSISTANCE.
WE'LL SHOW OUR LOYALTY AND HE'LL BE ON OUR SIDE.
I DON'T MIND, BUT THEY CAN'T USE FLYING MAGIC LIKE YOU. HOW WILL YOU BRING THEM TO THAT AREA?

THEY AREN'T JUST HOLING UP IN SOME VILLAGE.
THEY PROBABLY DIDN'T EVEN KNOW THAT HE WAS PLANNING TO VISIT THIS AREA AND JUST ASSUMED THE SOLDIERS WERE HERE FOR THEM.
THE BANDITS LIKELY DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT HIS HIGHNESS IS LIKE.
IT'S UNLIKELY ANY OF THE LIAISONS TRULY CONTROLLED THE BANDITS, AND INSTEAD JUST HAD A FEW INDIVIDUALS WORKING WITH THEM. THIS IS LIKELY JUST A NASTY PLAN THAT INVOLVED TELLING THEM THAT THE SOLDIERS ARE A SUBJUGATION FORCE.
TO THINK THEY WOULD ATTACK THE LAND UNDER MY JURIS-DICTION...
THE REGULAR ARMY IS CAREFULLY WATCHING THE BORDER.
IF WE WAIT FOR THE SNOW TO THAW, THEY MAY MANAGE TO CROSS THE MOUNTAINS AND SEEK ASYLUM IN THE NEIGHBORING COUNTRY.
THEY'VE TAKEN THE VILLAGERS HOSTAGE, STOLEN FOOD, AND ARE USING THE SNOW AS A NATURAL FORTRESS.
GH...

LEEFA...
KEEP YOUR SHORT TEMPER UNDER CONTROL.
I KNOW!
INSTEAD, WAIT HERE AND ACT AS A GUIDE FOR HIS HIGHNESS.
YOU CAN'T SAVE THE VILLAGE ALL ON YOUR OWN.

THE LOCAL MILITIA SHOULD BE ABLE TO HOLD OUT FOR A BIT...
OH, KINGS OF PAST,
PLEASE PROTECT YOUR PEOPLE...
IN THE FIRST PLACE,
AIN'T MY HOSTILITY TO MILEIDIA
AND MY DESIRE FOR FAME IN CENTRAL
BE-CAUSE I DIDN'T SEE WHAT WAS REALLY IMPOR-TANT?
I JUST DIDN'T BELIEVE IN MYSELF...
IN FACT... HIS HIGHNESS IS YOUNGER THAN ME...

I'M SUCH AN IDIOT...
IF I'D JUST LOOKED, I'D'VE FOUND PLENTY OF ANSWERS...
...
WHAT WAS I DOIN' ALL THIS TIME?
AS LONG AS THE VILLAGE IS FINE, I'LL BE HAPPY...
LEEFA,
IF YOU'VE REALIZED THAT, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO SEE OTHER PATHS NOW.
THINK OF THIS AS A CHANCE TO SHOW THE ARCHBISHOP AND SHRINE MAIDEN WHAT IT'S LIKE AROUND HERE.
OKAY...

THERE ARE ABOUT 30 BANDITS IN THE GROUP THAT ATTACKED PARTEAR VILLAGE.
ABOUT AN HOUR LATER, A MESSENGER KNIGHT SHOWED UP JUST AFTER LECTIVAL ARRIVED AT THE VILLAGE HE WAS HEADED TO.
WITH THEM IS A MAGICIAN WHO CAN CONTROL BEASTS.
LECTIVAL AND THE ACCOMPANYING ROYAL GUARDS AND MAIDEN CHIVALRIC ORDER GATHERED IN THE VILLAGE HALL TO HEAR THE MESSENGER'S EXPLANATION.
THE VILLAGE IS UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF PRIEST LEEFA.
WE ARE REQUESTING YOUR HIGHNESS' HELP IN SAVING THE VILLAGE.

WE ATTENDED THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL TOGETHER...
DO YOU KNOW HER?
.....
LEEFA'S VILLAGE? I HOPE THIS ISN'T SOME PLOT AGAINST US.
BUT IT WILL TAKE ABOUT AN HOUR DUE TO THE SNOW...
OUR COLLEAGUES ARE HURRYING TO THE VILLAGE,
ONLY 5. HOWEVER, I'M SURE THEY COULD HANDLE 30 BANDITS.
IT WOULDN'T TAKE HALF AN HOUR IF YOU COULD FLY... HOW MANY OF THE ROYAL GUARDS CAN USE FLYING MAGIC?

THERE IS ALSO THE MATTER OF THE VILLAGERS BEING USED AS HOSTAGES.
THIS JUST MAKES IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR ONLY 5 PEOPLE.
THE ISSUE IS THE MAGICIAN AND THE BEASTS HE CAN CONTROL, AS THAT IS NO DIFFERENT TO FACING 100 BANDITS.
SINCE IT WAS A SURPRISE ATTACK, THE LOCAL MILITIA WON'T BE ABLE TO HOLD OUT FOR LONG...
HMM...

TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE.
DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE PLANNING ON GOING YOURSELF.
THESE ARE JUST BANDITS.
.....
I KNOW... FOR NOW LET'S SEND THOSE 5 AHEAD.
THEY CAN HOLD THEM UP UNTIL THE OTHER KNIGHTS GET THERE.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSIS-TANCE, YOUR HIGH-NESS.

GET THE NECESSARY EQUIPMENT FOR THE ADVANCE PARTY!
THE REST OF YOU ARE TO STANDBY IN THIS VILLAGE AND PROTECT IT!
THE INNER PALACE GUARDS ARE TO PROTECT LILICIA AND MILEIDIA!
YES, SIR!
MADAM LILICIA AND YOUR GRACE, THIS WAY PLEASE...
HUH?
WHERE'S MASTER LECTIVAL?
.....
AH!

PARTEAR IS
THIS WAY!

PREPARING THE ATTACK...
HUH?
I HEARD THAT ONLY 5 OF THE ROYAL GUARDS WERE COMING... NO, THERE'S DEFINITELY 6... PERHAPS THEY HAD ANOTHER SOLDIER WHO KNEW FLYING MAGIC...
TAKE DOWN THE BANDITS AND RESCUE THE VILLAGERS.
CHARGE IN AFTER THE LONG-RANGE BOMBARD-MENT.
THE TARGET IS UP AHEAD.

FIRE!
AN IMAGINARY BARREL?!
?.....
... W-WAIT A MINUTE! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! THE VILLAGE WILL BE A MESS!

SO THEY'LL ONLY KNOCK PEOPLE UNCONSCIOUS AND THEY CAN'T EVEN DAMAGE A BUILDING.
OH,
DON'T WORRY, THOSE GUIDED MISSILES WILL BREAK UP,
.....
HUH?
... SO, WHAT NOW?
WH-
WELL, YOU'RE A PRIEST AND NOT A SOLDIER, SO IF YOU'RE AFRAID, YOU CAN JUST STANDBY HERE...
I'M ALSO COMING! THAT MUCH IS A GIVEN!

THAT VILLAGE IS HOME TO YOUNG CHILDREN AND MY STUDENTS!
FOLLOW ME!